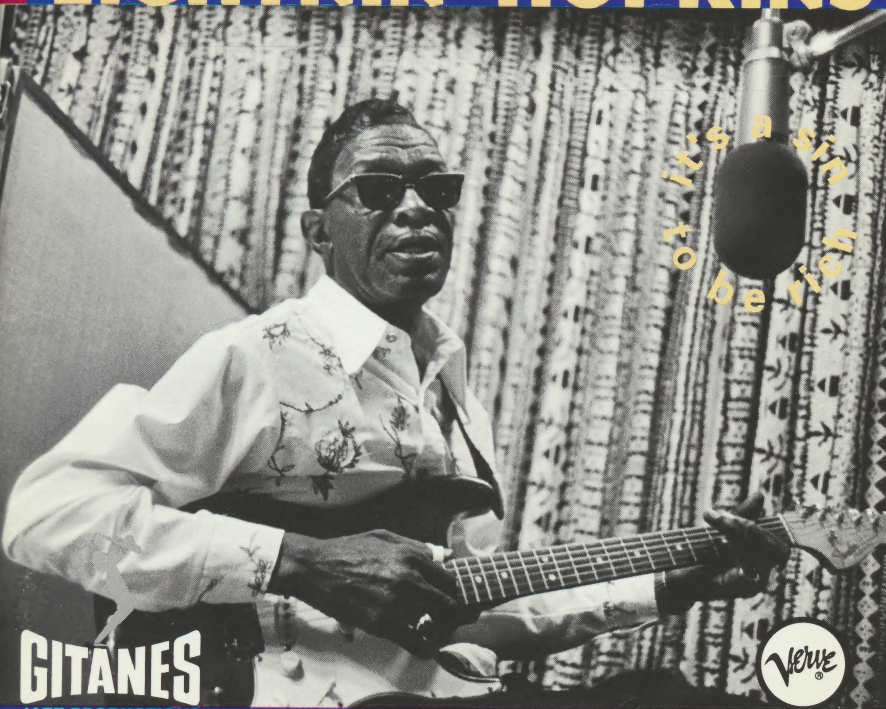


# LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS



**GITANES**

JAZZ PRODUCTIONS



# LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS

- |           |  |      |
|-----------|--|------|
| <b>1</b>  | ROBERTA  | 4:33 |
| <b>2</b>  | KATIE MAE  | 6:23 |
| <b>3</b>  | HOWLIN' WOLF <i>Lightnin' Hopkins - rap</i>                | 0:30 |
| <b>4</b>  | THE REHEARSAL (for IT'S A SIN TO BE RICH)                  | 4:57 |
| <b>5</b>  | IT'S A SIN TO BE RICH,<br>IT'S A LOW-DOWN SHAME TO BE POOR | 4:45 |
| <b>6</b>  | Y'ALL ESCUSE ME  | 6:15 |
| <b>7</b>  | JUST OUT OF LOUISIANA                                      | 3:35 |
| <b>8</b>  | GET OUT YOUR PENCIL <i>Lightnin' Hopkins - rap</i>         | 0:20 |
| <b>9</b>  | I FORGOT TO PULL MY SHOES OFF                              | 5:29 |
| <b>10</b> | TURN ME ON   | 7:28 |
| <b>11</b> | CANDY KITCHEN  | 5:57 |

Lightnin' Hopkins guitar, slide guitar, piano, vocal, comments -  
 John Lee Hooker guitar, vocal, comments - Clifford Coulter  
 electric piano, piano, bass, "electric lady" (melodica) - Mel Brown  
 guitar, organ, electric piano - Jesse Edwin Davis guitar - Luther  
 Tucker guitar - Charlie Grimes guitar - David Cohen guitar -  
 Joe Frank Corolla bass - Lonnie Castile drums - Bruce  
 Walters drums - Jim Gordon drums  
 Michael White violin on 1

Recorded May 16 and 17, 1972 at The Village Recorder, Los Angeles.

Produced by Ed Michel.

Executive producers: John Snyder and Jean-Philippe Allard

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NEVER-BEFORE-RELEASED RECORDINGS

it's a sin  
to be rich



**GITANES**  
JAZZ PRODUCTIONS

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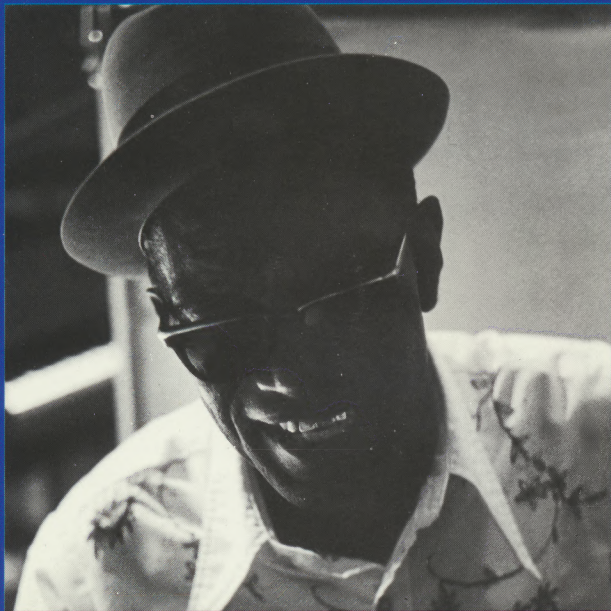
VERVE

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS - it's a sin to be rich

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it's a sin to be rich

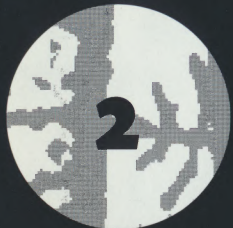
**LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS**





**ROBERTA** 4:33

Lightnin' Hopkins - guitar, vocal  
Michael White - violin  
Clifford Coulter - electric piano  
David Cohen - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums



**KATIE MAE** 6:23

Lightnin' Hopkins - guitar, vocal  
John Lee Hooker - guitar, vocal, comments  
Clifford Coulter - "electric lady" (melodica)  
Mel Brown - guitar  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums

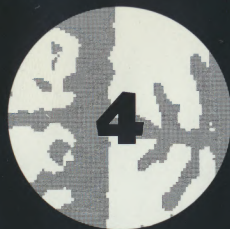
*(during the first half of this selection, Mr. Hooker is largely off-mike)*



**HOWLIN' WOLF** 0:30

Lightnin' Hopkins - rap

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**THE REHEARSAL** 4:57  
(for IT'S A SIN TO BE RICH)

Lightnin' Hopkins - slide guitar, comments  
Mel Brown - guitar  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
John Lee Hooker - guitar  
Clifford Coulter - bass  
Bruce Walters - drums



**IT'S A SIN TO BE RICH,  
IT'S A LOW-DOWN SHAME TO BE POOR** 4:45

Lightnin' Hopkins - guitar, vocal  
Mel Brown - guitar  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
John Lee Hooker - guitar  
Clifford Coulter - bass  
Bruce Walters - drums



**Y'ALL ESCUSE ME** 6:15

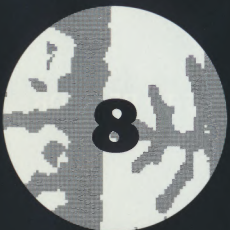
Lightnin' Hopkins - slide guitar  
Clifford Coulter - electric piano  
Mel Brown - organ  
David Cohen - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums

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**JUST OUT OF LOUISIANA** 3:35

Lightnin' Hopkins - slide guitar, vocal  
John Lee Hooker - guitar, comments (off-mike)  
Mel Brown - electric piano  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
Luther Tucker - guitar  
Charlie Grimes - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums



**GET OUT YOUR PENCIL** 0:20

*Lightnin' Hopkins - rap*



**I FORGOT TO PULL MY SHOES OFF** 5:29

Lightnin' Hopkins - guitar, vocal  
Clifford Coulter - piano  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
Mel Brown - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Jim Gordon - drums



**TURN ME ON** 7:28

Lightnin' Hopkins - piano, vocal  
Luther Tucker - guitar  
Charlie Grimes - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums



**CANDY KITCHEN** 5:57

Lightnin' Hopkins - guitar, vocal  
John Lee Hooker - guitar, vocal  
Jesse Edwin Davis - guitar  
Luther Tucker - guitar  
Charlie Grimes - guitar  
Joe Frank Corolla - bass  
Lonnie Castile - drums

ROBERTA by John Lee Hooker (Folkways Music BMI)  
KATIE MAE by Lightnin' Hopkins (Prestige Music BMI)  
CANDY KITCHEN by Lightnin' Hopkins / Jules Taub (Powerforce Music BMI)  
other songs : Copyright Control

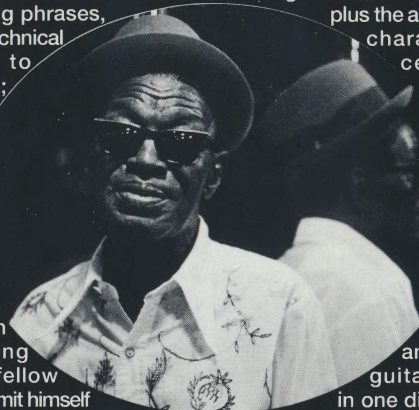


**It was** twenty years ago today.... Phew! time certainly flies when you're having fun. In 1972, two good pals of mine had jumped all the way into it, left perfectly secure *Music Industry* jobs, moved mountains, and started just what the world needed: another record company. Since they were interested in celebrating the multiple glories of American Music, one of the artists they signed was Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, who was, depending on your sense of peerage, either the Duke, Baron, Earl, or Crown Prince of Houston, and by anybody's standard one of the key figures in the history of the blues. Sam Hopkins is one of those interesting characters who is clearly a "folk" musician, but who equally well bridges the movement of blues from rural to urban, and stands as a cornerstone of proto—R&B and early-rock forms. Blues cognoscenti admired Hopkins for his lyrics, which always balanced older traditional lines with immediate and spontaneous this-is-here-and-now autobiographical material, for his virtuoso personalization of the unaccompanied Texas guitar style, and for the stinging bite and impact of his performances.

Although Lightnin's (you can decide whether or not to use the terminal "g"—he signed contracts "Sam L. Hopkins," presumably willing to let everybody else deal with whether it was going to be Lightning or Lightnin') first recordings were made with a pianist (Wilson "Thunder" Smith; the combination of the names is where the "Lightnin'" is generally presumed to have come from), he usually recorded and performed self-accompanied rather than in a soloist-with-band context (there are performances with other bluesmen, such as the early encounters with his brother Joel, later brothers Joel and John Henry, or ones with Sonny Terry or Luke "Long Gone" Miles, and the group interplay between Hopkins, Terry, Brownie McGhee, and Big Joe Williams, but these are more in the nature of song-or-verse-swapping, rather than "accompanied" sessions); his few real accompanied-by-others sessions include Los Angeles dates with members of Jimmy McCracklin's combo, Houston sessions with what might well have been Lightnin's occasionally-working band (Billy Bizer on harmonica, pianist Buster Pickens,

bassist Donald Cooks, and drummer Spider Kilpatrick), and sessions at Rudy Van Gelder's in New Jersey with bassist Leonard Gaskin and drummer Herbie Lovelle, at least some of which involve overdubbing the rhythm onto pre-recorded Hopkins tracks.

Part of the reason for mostly solo recording and performing is that Lightnin' was an immensely personal player, which is to say that he was no respecter of the formalized twelve-bar format. The length of his lines grew out of the length of his sung phrases, plus the addition of a closing guitar phrase (a technical characteristic which connects him to certain styles of African song); additionally, he had the habit of suiting his choice of when to move to a IV or V chord more to his mood of the moment than to the conventions of the stylized blues form (there were numerous occasions when I watched him exercise this privilege to "devil" the musicians with whom he was playing, delaying an expected chord change until a fellow guitarist, bassist, or pianist would commit himself in one direction, and then, with an unkind little grin, deliberately going the other way; Lightnin' liked to remind everyone who was boss).



Additionally, rehearsals didn't mean much, since Lightnin' never did things the same way twice. (Which is also why "Roberta" isn't anything like the one you're used to from other blues singers' performances, or why this particular "Katie Mae" isn't the Katie Mae of whom he had sung previously, who "walks



like she got oil wells in her backyard....")

In the face of all this, the record company and I decided to record Lightnin' in a band context, because, in the classic manner, it seemed like a good idea at the time. And, remaining true to the *Blues Tradition*, the sessions were done in a hurry ("do it now, worry 'bout it later....") because Lightnin' was going to be in L.A. for a hot minute and there was money to pay the guys and maybe even the studio. Fortunately, the paperwork was straight, as Lightnin' had availed himself of a Houston physician, Dr. C.G. Harold, to "look after his interests" (in the great tradition of having, if you will avoid my *linguistic chontransduction*, a caucasian to stand behind one and put his hand on the appropriate shoulder and say, "This is my Afro-American...."; anyway, Dr. Harold is still on the job, making sure that the Hopkins estate is properly represented), and there were no more than the usual number of things likely to get out of control. So we started out on Tuesday, May 16, 1972. I had the advantage of working in what was at the time my "home studio," The Village Recorder, in Los Angeles, and with my first-choice engineer, the redoubtable Baker Bigsby.

Let's take a look at the rest of the suspects. I started recording with David Cohen, an enthusiastic young blues guitarist who had absolutely absorbed the Hopkins style while hanging around at Los Angeles' notable folk club, The Ash Grove, and who by this time had become a studio guitarist, and with the distinguished jazz bassist Charlie Haden, who was principally known through his associations with Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett and as leader (on recordings) of his own Liberation Music Orchestra. (Yes, Virginia—this does mean that there is more music recorded than what you have here. When? Sooner or later.) Then I added new-jazz violinist Michael White, who had come out of the San Francisco band The Fourth Way and had made a substantial impression recording with saxophonist John Handy, and who I was recording as a leader of his own ensembles for Impulse, and multi-instrumentalist Clifford Coulter (keyboards, guitar, bass, and an electric

melodica with a wa-wa pedal, which he called his "electric lady"), who I was also recording for Impulse, and who was, whenever possible, an active participant in any blues dates I was doing.

The next additions were Mel Brown, another Impulse leader, a wonderful guitarist, and a reliable bassist if nobody else was around, a swell pianist and organist, odd-lot singer, and truly awful accordion player (is there any other? always excepting, of course, Clifton Chenier and a couple of his zydeco fellows); Brown is another of my ultra-dependable blues session standbys; Joe Frank Corolla, a good ol' Mississippi boy who achieved most of his fame as the *middle guy* in the pop group Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds, on bass (as I recall, the first-call bass guy I had sent for just never did show up—Charlie Haden notwithstanding, I wanted somebody who thought in electric bass/R&B terms); and Joe Frank's running buddy Lonnie Castile on drums, because the drummer who was supposed to be there must have been with the bass player. (I meant it when I said the sessions were done in a hurry.) Next addition was Jesse Edwin Davis, fresh out of a number of Taj Mahal working bands, and beginning to record under his own name, who I'd had occasion to record with a couple of other major-league bluesmen, like B.B. King. And drummer Bruce Walters, a friend of many in the room, in the right place at the right time.

Somewhere about this point John Lee Hooker arrived with his two working guitarists (from "The Coast to Coast Blues Band"), Luther Tucker, who carried a substantial reputation from Chicago recordings made both as a sideman and under his own name, and the less-well-known Charlie Grimes, to whom John Lee was making available a lot of solo space. (There is no way to say enough in praise of John Lee Hooker, nor at this late date is anything along that line necessary, but he is a man who responds to the moment, whether or not a microphone is at hand, so, at certain points in this recording, you will hear whatever part of his contribution that could be picked up by, say, the drum mikes. I used to be unwilling to release



"technically imperfect" tracks, but at this late date feel it would be criminal not to share some wonderful music because somebody isn't miked quite as well as he ought to have been.)

We broke after about five or six hours of recording. It was largely a bourbon-fuelled date (I kept the Park Plaza Liquor receipts, along with one for a buck and half for cigars—presumably for Mr. Hopkins, although I don't recall—and a somewhat inexplicable one for \$1.25, "epoxy" in the session-notes folder), and by that time everybody had reached a point of scant return, although Lightnin' was still in fine fettle, having both spent time driving the piano and demonstrating a fine hand as a slide guitarist, a skill I was unaware he possessed up to that point. We resumed at noon on Wednesday the 17th in order to try a few more things before Mr. Hopkins had to be on a plane back home. New starters were L.A. drum legends Jim Gordon and Jim Keltner, who used to enjoy splitting the drum chair tune by tune on blues dates. We got four whole tunes, one of which surfaces here, and a late-start punch-in on a slow jam that just never happened. Then it was time to send the gentlemen from Texas flyin' home. I came back to the studio after the trip to the airport and rough-mixed myself a tape for home listening so I could look at what we'd done from a more objective place (I'm always either too wildly optimistic or too bleakly pessimistic on the date, and have learned not to make my key or final judgements then; I believe it's Mr. Wordsworth who spoke of emotion recollected in tranquillity). I listened once and made some useful notes, and then my pal Geordie Hormel, studio owner to end all studio owners, asked if his son John, a

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a genuine blues fanatic, could borrow the tapes to listen to overnight. ...and I never saw them again....

Meanwhile, since we're talking *Tradition*, my two pals with the record company began to run into the *Traditional Problems* to which all *Young Record Companies* are heir, and before long, long before we managed to get any further into the project, they were experiencing a severe case of "shorness-of-the-bux" with complications of "closis-of-the-doorsis." Since I had a more or less remunerative day gig, it didn't bother me to pick up the odd tab, and when they suggested I just take the masters in lieu of any payment and reimbursement due, well, that sounded like a perfectly fine idea. I didn't know exactly what was there, but I was sure it was going to be enough to cover my costs.

Nineteen years and change pass. Now sales of and interest in jazz and blues recordings are wonderfully stable things, because there is always an interested and active body of fans who are trying to hear more of the musics they love. On the other hand, the *Record Industry* tends to run in cycles of "Now It's Hot" and "Now It Doesn't Exist," which meant that during all that time I never found anyone in the biz interested enough in the *Lost Lightnin' Hopkins Mines* to even come up with enough scratch to cover the expenses of going back and remixing the masters to see if my enthusiasm was justified, so the tapes lay in the vault, just cooling out like Sleeping Beauty waiting for the proper smooch.

But fate is kind. And my friend John Snyder is a guy with sufficient foresight and imagination to give it a lever and place to stand, probably because he is himself a North Carolina guy, and they have a blues tradition of their own. So, with his assistance, and without further ado, I'd like to turn you over to Mr. Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, who will take care of the rest.

Ed Michel  
Big Island, Hawaii - October 3, 1992



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Recorded **May 16** and **17, 1972** at **The Village Recorder, Los Angeles.**

Engineered by **Baker Bigsby.**

Mixed **December 1991** at **Group IV, Hollywood.**

Engineered by **Baker Bigsby** assisted by **Dann Thompson, Eric Cowden** and **Jeff Gautier's** software expertise.

Mastered **October 16, 1992** at **Top Master, Paris.**

Engineered by **Didier Marc.**

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Special thanks to **Bill Szymczyk** and **Larry Ray** of Z Mfg. Co. for planting the seed, and to **John Snyder** and **Chris Whent** for making it possible to bring the project to fruition; to **Mitch Kampf, Angel Balester, Jeff Gautier, Eric Miller** for endless goodnesses, and **Kathryn Lawrence**, especially for patience.

Photography: **Philip Melnick**

Art direction: **Patrice Beauséjour**

US release coordination: **Nate Herr and Chris Maguire**

Design: **CB Graphic**

US graphic production: **Craig Jones and John Sykes**

Produced by **Ed Michel.**

Executive producers: **John Snyder** and **Jean-Philippe Allard**

# 15



# LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS



it's a sin  
to be rich

- 1 ROBERTA
- 2 KATIE MAE
- 3 HOWLIN' WOLF
- 4 THE REHEARSAL
- 5 IT'S A SIN TO BE RICH,  
IT'S A LOW-DOWN SHAME  
TO BE POOR
- 6 Y'ALL ESCUSE ME
- 7 JUST OUT OF LOUISIANA
- 8 GET OUT YOUR PENCIL
- 9 I FORGOT TO PULL MY  
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- 10 TURN ME ON
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